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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9901  
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE PRIORITY 4764  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY 1713  
RUCOWCV/CUSTOMS CARIBBEAN ATTACHE MIAMI FL PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEFHLC/HQS DHS WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SANTO DOMINGO 000019

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STATE FOR WHA/CAR C WARD AND E JAFFEE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [DR](#)

SUBJECT: NO DOMINICAN-HAITIAN POLITICAL PARTY

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The press recently reported that the Dominican-Haitian Community Political Movement (MPCDH), led by Ruben Jean-Baptiste Latorti, will form a political party representing the interests of Dominicans of Haitian descent. Jean-Baptiste clarified that he will not form a political party, rather just an organization fighting for "political space." Various representatives and leaders from political parties and NGOs reacted to the report with criticism and skepticism. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Jean-Baptiste clarified that he does not intend to form a political party, rather just an organization to "fight for political space to guarantee representation in various levels of government in the national sphere." The motivation for forming this party is due to the fragmentation of the Dominican-Haitian community and their minimal participation in the different parts of the government.

¶3. (U) The major political parties, reacted to the press announcement differently. The Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC) Secretary General Victor Gomez Casanova criticized the idea of a political party of Dominican-Haitians, stating that this posed a threat to Dominican nationality and sovereignty as only Dominicans may form political parties even though MPCDH stated that they will represent the interests of Dominicans. The Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) viewed the announcement amenable, provided the MPCDH complied with all the rules and requirements set by the Central Elections Board (JCE). The ruling Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) reacted cautiously stating it (the recognition of MPCDH) needs to be studied closely. The JCE president stated that as long as any Dominican meet the requirements of citizenship and of the JCE, with all the proper documentation, Dominicans of Haitian parentage (or French or Spanish for that matter) may form a political party and participate in the electoral process.

¶4. (SBU) Civil society advocates for the rights of Dominicans of Haitian descent viewed the announcement with concern. Sonia Pierre of the Movement of Dominican-Haitian Women (MUDHA) called the move "senseless." Joseph Cherubin the director of the Socio-Cultural Movement for Haitian Workers (MOSCTHA) described it as "inopportune," while Luckner Bel, an activist working with batey residents called it "stupid." Their goal is for the integration of Dominicans of Haitian descent into Dominican society, whereas the creation of a political party may highlight differences between ethnic Haitians and Dominicans and give further argument to their

opponents that they are not "true" Dominicans. Indeed, in a conversation with POLOFF, one Dominican (a private citizen) described the formation of a Dominican-Haitian party as "scary, fractious and divisive" and founded on "ethnic separation."

15. (SBU) Civil society leaders claimed that Jean-Baptiste is a PLD member as he was reported to be a sub-secretary at the Ministry of Education. Jean-Baptiste clarified that he is not a sub-secretary, though confirmed cyptically that he works for the Secretary of Education in some capacity. Civil society leaders commented that the formation of MPCDH, may have the intention of garnering votes for the PLD from Dominicans of Haitian descent, who historically have voted for the PRD. The MPCDH may also lead to greater scrutiny of voter's documentation as the issue brings to the forefront whether they are Dominicans or Haitians. Some estimate that there are as many as 250,000 Dominican voters of Haitian descent.

16. (SBU) Comment: There is no doubt that the Haitian-Dominican community here suffers discrimination and human right abuses, and that they have a very limited voice in national politics and policy formulation. However, the concerns expressed by Haitian-Dominican NGOs about the creation of MPCDH show that the formation of an ethnically based political party is just as controversial in the Dominican Republic as it would be in the United States or Europe. End Comment.  
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